

# COVID-19 FAQs for Heartland Housing Foundation Staff

Current July 24, 2020

## Table of Contents

I am not feeling well what do I do? .....	2
Someone in my household is experiencing flu-like symptoms, can I still come to work?.....	3
Who is required to self-isolate? .....	3
What is self-isolation? .....	4
If I am required to self-isolate when can I come back to work? .....	4
What are ‘outbreak protocols’ and why are they important? .....	5
With other companies closing due to COVID, why are we still working? .....	5
Can an employee work from home while in self-isolation?.....	5
What if an employee cannot work from home while in self-isolation? .....	5
How does Alberta’s Relaunch Strategy affect us? .....	6
Can I take vacation? .....	6
What happens if an employee who has travel booked, voluntarily undertakes this travel, and returns home? .	6
Can I still work my second job while performing work with Heartland Housing Foundation?.....	7
Are there any incentives to work during the COVID-19 pandemic?.....	7
<b>UPDATED</b> What safety measures has Heartland Housing Foundation put into place to prevent the spread of COVID-19? .....	8
My site has been deemed to be in a COVID-19 outbreak, am I safe? .....	9
<b>UPDATED</b> I work in a position that requires me to be within 2 metres/6 feet of my colleagues and residents despite social distancing best practices. Do I need to wear PPE? .....	9
<b>UPDATED</b> I have seen people wearing surgical masks in the public, should I be wearing one while working? .....	10
<b>UPDATED</b> How come only certain staff are required to wear a mask?.....	10
What can I do protect my skin from PPE use?.....	11
Do I need to wear PPE that is irritating my skin? .....	11
I am worried I may bring the virus home to my family. How can I ensure that I do not bring it home? .....	11
What happens during a COVID-19 outbreak?.....	12
There are so many changes happening in such a short time, why? .....	12
How do I stay up to date with things happening in Heartland Housing Foundation? .....	12
Resources.....	13

## Key Terms:

**Self-Isolate:** To stay at home and refrain from contact with other people for a defined period of time. See “What is self-isolation?” in this document for details.

**Social/Physical Distancing:** To maintain a 2-meter (6 foot) distance between yourself and other people to help prevent the spread of disease.

**Proper Handwashing:** Washing of the hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, thoroughly washing all surfaces of the hands and wrists. A 60%+ alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used in the absence of soap and water.

**Close Contact:** is defined as a person who provided care for an ill person without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment  
*or* who lived with/otherwise had close prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with an ill person while they were infectious  
*or* had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of an ill person (e.g. was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

**Self Assessment:** To use recommended tools to direct next steps before you arrive at work, or if you feel ill at any time while on shift or at home. Healthcare Worker Self-Assessment tool - <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/HWAssessLanding.aspx>

## I am not feeling well what do I do?

In accordance with HHF policy along with recent legislative changes due to COVID-19, employees must not report to work if they aren't well.

Effective May 4, 2020, individuals experiencing '**new or worsening that are related to allergies, chronic or pre-existing conditions**' related to:

- Fever (38°C or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Sore throat/painful swallowing
- Stuffy/runny nose
- Headache
- Muscle/joint ache
- Feeling unwell/fatigue/severe exhaustion
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea/unexplained loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

## MUST:

- Stay home and self-isolate immediately – do not go to an ER or clinic
- Must take the online COVID-19 Self Assessment [for Healthcare Workers](#) and be tested.
  - o If you are required to contact 811, while speaking to someone regarding testing for COVID-19, **you need to identify to them that you work in a Licensed Supportive Living Site and are currently classified as a healthcare worker**

- If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and inform them if you suspect you have COVID-19
- Contact your Manager if you are feeling unwell, in any way, as soon as possible

## Someone in my household is experiencing flu-like symptoms, can I still come to work?

Employees must complete the self-assessment prior to coming to work and be able to truthfully answer 'NO' to all questions.

- o Do you have any of the following symptoms which are new or worsened if associated to allergies, chronic or pre-existing conditions: fever (38°C or higher), cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat/painful swallowing, stuffy/runny nose, headache, muscle/joint ache, feeling unwell/fatigue/severe exhaustion, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea/unexplained loss of appetite, loss of sense of smell or taste and/or conjunctivitis (pink eye)?
  - o Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days OR have you had close contact\* with anyone showing symptoms who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
  - o Have you had close contact with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever in the last 14 days without the use of appropriate PPE?
  - o Have you had close contact\* in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated\*\* or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19 without the use of appropriate PPE?
  - o Have you had lab exposure to biological material known to contain COVID-19?
- If you are able to answer 'NO' to these questions you would be able to come to work. Employees must ensure they are following all proper hygiene and PPE requirements for the jobs that they are performing.
  - Employees must ensure that they are continuously monitoring themselves for any symptoms throughout their day. And formally twice per day. If at any point they are starting to feel ill, you must immediately don a mask, contact your manager and leave the building immediately. You will then be required to take the COVID-19 [Self Assessment for Healthcare Workers](#) and self-isolate for at least 10 days or whenever the symptoms resolve themselves, whichever is longer. If you have been tested for COVID-19, you must communicate those results to your manager. If the test is confirmed to be positive, you will be required to self-isolate for 14 days or whenever the symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
  - \*\*Being investigated\*\* - is defined as someone you have had close contact with that has had close contact with a confirmed case.

## Who is required to self-isolate?

Albertans are legally required to self-isolate for:

- 14 days if they have recently returned from international travel or are in close contact\* with someone who tested positive or is probable for COVID-19
- 10 days or until symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer, if you are feeling ill in any way, including with symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat) that **are not related** to a pre-existing illness or health conditions and are **not** tested
- If you have **tested negative** and have no known exposure to the virus, you are not legally required to isolate for 10 days. However, it is important to stay home until your symptoms resolve so that you did not infect others
- If an employee has been tested **positive** for COVID-19 they are not able to return to work for 14 days from the onset of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer

Employees exhibiting chills, painful swallowing, stuffy nose, headache, muscle/joint ache, feeling unwell/fatigue/severe exhaustion, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea/unexplained loss of appetite, loss of sense of smell or taste, conjunctivitis (pink eye) must self isolate and be tested. Employees can return if their test results are negative **AND** symptoms have resolved.

Employees who have developed new onset of symptoms, not listed above, that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition, but none of these symptoms warranted testing for COVID-19, then you must remain off work and limit contact with others until your symptoms resolve.

## What is self-isolation?

Self-isolation has been put into place to help stop or minimize the spread of COVID-19. If you are at home when you start to experience symptoms and you continue to self-isolate for the duration of an illness, there is a much lower chance that you will pass that illness onto others.

### Self-isolation Guidelines:

- Stay home – do not leave your home or attend work, school, social events or any other public gatherings.
- Avoid close contact with other people, including household members but especially seniors and people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- If you must leave your home, go directly home after your essential outing is completed and don't take public transportation like buses, taxis or ridesharing, where possible to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Watch for symptoms in yourself and your family members.
- Don't share household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels and pillows. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water, place in the dishwasher for cleaning, or wash in the washing machine.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and counters.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, and wash your hands after touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use delivery or pick-up services for errands like grocery shopping.
- Ask friends or family to drop off food, medicine and other supplies.
- For more information on self-isolation guidelines, visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread.aspx>

## If I am required to self-isolate when can I come back to work?

- If you have tested **positive** for COVID-19 you must self-isolate from work until 14 days have passed since symptoms started AND symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer.
  - o You may have heard that anyone with COVID-19 symptoms is required to self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and until their symptoms resolved. However, HHF employees are defined as Healthcare Workers which requires our staff to stay isolated for an additional four days.
  - o This extra measure provides another level of protection to our lodges and the most vulnerable people COVID-19 can affect
- Anyone who has returned from international travel within the last 14 days or has been in close contact\* with someone who has tested positive for COVID must self-isolate for a **minimum of 14 days**.
  - o If during that self-isolation period the employee starts showing symptoms of COVID-19, that employee must continue self-isolating for a minimum of 14 days from the start of the symptoms or until the symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer
  - o If during self-isolation employees do not exhibit symptoms during this period they can return to work after the 14<sup>th</sup> day.
- Anyone who answers 'YES' to the daily health screen must be tested.

- If an employee is off due to cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat, and if test results are **negative**, employees are required to remain off work and self-isolated until the symptoms resolve.
- If an employee is off due to chills, painful swallowing, stuffy nose, headache, muscle/joint ache, feeling unwell/fatigue/severe exhaustion, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea/unexplained loss of appetite, loss of sense of smell or taste or conjunctivitis (pink eye) and if the test results are **negative**, employees are to remain off of work until the symptoms resolve.
  - o Note that a lingering cough may persist for several weeks after recovering from an illness, but that doesn't mean that the employee is infectious. If an employee has recovered from their illness but still has a cough and no other symptoms are present they are able to return to work at the minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms or until all other symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer
  - o Swabs for employees will not be completed on site for privacy reasons

### What are 'outbreak protocols' and why are they important?

Under the Chief Medical Officer of Health Record of Decision (12-2020), it is mandatory for lodges to report COVID-19 outbreaks to the AHS Rapid COVID-19 Response team. The intent of these measures is to protect the health and safety of residents and staff. If we are able to proactively identify a COVID-19 outbreak within our lodges, we can hopefully control the spread to others. The new outbreak protocols are:

- A site in **OUTBREAK PREVENTION** is defined as:
  - o No residents or staff showing any symptoms of COVID-19
- A site **UNDER INVESTIGATION** is defined as:
  - o At least one resident or staff member who exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19
- A **CONFIRMED COVID-19 OUTBREAK** is defined as:
  - o Any one individual (resident or staff) laboratory-confirmed to have COVID-19
  - o Note that sites with two or more individuals with confirmed COVID-19 will be included in public reporting.

Due to these requirements employees who are not well must self-isolated and complete the Healthcare Worker Health Screening questionnaire or contact 811 to determine if testing would be required. Ensure this is communicated with your manager. The information you provide is vital to accurately report and properly respond based on the testing results.

### With other companies closing due to COVID, why are we still working?

Heartland Housing Foundation is considered an essential service and requires employees like you to continue to offer these services to and for our residents. We are implementing the controls required by the Chief Medical Officer, Alberta Health Services (AHS) and our internal HSE program to ensure that we minimize the risk to our staff while continuing to provide services to the residents.

### Can an employee work from home while in self-isolation?

If the employee's position includes tasks that can be performed while working from home, they can continue to work and be paid regular time for all hours worked.

### What if an employee cannot work from home while in self-isolation?

- The employee will be considered on sick leave for the self-isolation period and eligible to be paid from their accrued sick bank.

- Should an employee exhaust their sick bank they should contact their Manager to discuss other options for paid leave

## How does Alberta's Relaunch Strategy affect us?

On April 30, 2020, Premier Kenney announced Alberta's relaunch strategy. This strategy indicates that Alberta will be implementing a plan to safely and gradually open businesses and activities to the public in three stages. In the strategy it indicates that Vulnerable Albertans (facility-based like our Lodges) will have restrictions in place for visitors, staff and the operations until at least stage three.

HHF follows guidelines set out in the Chief Medical Officer of Health Records of Decisions. In conjunction with Alberta's Relaunch strategies, restrictions placed on our residents will gradually be lifted as well. However, HHF requirements for cleaning will be even more important in keeping our residents safe. Stay up to date with operational changes in your site's communication book and/or memo boards.

To find out more information about Alberta's Relaunch visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-relaunch-strategy.aspx>

## Can I take vacation?

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed more obligations on our organizational protocols, however, HHF does recognize the importance of personal time off to benefit employee's health and mental well-being. Employees wishing to take vacation are asked to make those requests to their manager.

Due to the added operational needs, vacation approvals are contingent on staffing needs and operational requirements. Fewer employees and shorter durations of vacations may be approved at this time. With the limited amount of vacations we are able to approve at this time, please ensure you have been notified by your manager that your time was approved prior to making any arrangements.

With restrictions in Alberta being lifted, non-essential travel outside of Canada is still not recommended.

- Review general advice on travel and related restrictions at:
  - o Alberta COVID-19 Travel Advice <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-travel-advice.aspx>
  - o Government of Canada Travel Advisories <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- Upon returning from any travel outside of Canada will result in a mandatory 14 day isolation without pay
  - o Based on the mandatory 14 day isolation period, HHF will be required to take that into consideration when approving requested vacation.
  - o Managers will be required to assess business needs to determine if the operations would be able to accommodate the extended time away from work due to the combination of vacation and isolation
  - o Failure to return to work after the approved period would result in job abandonment

## What happens if an employee who has travel booked, voluntarily undertakes this travel, and returns home?

- The employee must follow all protocols outlined for any returning traveler.
- The employee will be required to self-isolate for 14 calendar days from their arrival home and is not to report to work upon the isolation period is over.
- The employee must provide their supervisor or manager with proof of their travel location.
- The employee will be considered on an unpaid leave for the self-isolation period.

After the 14-day self-isolation period has passed and the staff member presents no symptoms of COVID or other illness, they will be considered able to return to their scheduled rotation.

### **Can I still work my second job while performing work with Heartland Housing Foundation?**

In the Public Health Order (CMOH-10-2020) employees were required to declare a primary work assignment by April 15, 2020. On April 23, 2020 HHF implemented the restriction to having employees work only at one location.

The intention of these changes is to help protect our residents from exposure to COVID-19 by ensuring our staff are minimizing their exposure risk while not at work. We know that this change can have a significant impact to our employees through a loss of hours and income.

The seniors that we serve are considered to be the most vulnerable to COVID-19. HHF wants to ensure that we are safe-guarding our residents to the best of our ability while being mindful that our residents are living independently within our lodges. That is why HHF is continuing to request our staff to work only at one employer at this time to help minimize the potential risk of exposure to other employees and residents. Following the announcement on April 30, 2020, Alberta will be working on a 'relaunch strategy' in which we will review and assess the risks then communicate to staff when we are able to lift this restriction.

If you wish to work more hours, we are asking those staff to speak to their manager. HHF cannot guarantee the addition of hours, however, by knowing that there is a desire to work extra hours and shifts will aid the managers when they are scheduling their employees.

Effective June 18, 2020, HHF will be removing the restriction for employees to only work at a single employer, with the exception of individuals working at another long-term care, supportive living, or acute care settings (e.g. lodges, group homes or hospitals). Employees who work in another long-term care, supportive living, or health care site will still be required to maintain their primary work assignment.

If you intend to resume employment at a second location or intend to resume employment with Heartland Housing Foundation as a second job, please notify your manager before June 18. It will be the discretion of the site management team to schedule employees accordingly. This may occur after the June 18 relaunch date. We ask that all employees continue to carefully complete their health assessment screenings before and during each and every shift to ensure the continued health of our residents as these restrictions are lifted.

### **Are there any incentives to work during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Effective April 10, 2020, HHF has implemented a \$2.00/hour COVID shift premium. This premium will be paid to all front-line, hourly employees for all hours worked during the period commencing on April 10 and June 18. In addition to the premium, HHF introduced a 10% retention bonus for employees who commenced their employment before or after April 10 and continues that employment to July 16.

Effective on June 18th the temporary \$2.00/hour COVID shift premium expired. The final paycheque where the premium will appear will be June 26. The intention of this temporary premium was to offer hourly frontline staff additional support during our transition into pandemic-related operations. Over the last two months, we have been able to adjust our staffing levels, shift availability and work processes to accommodate the changes required by Alberta Health due to COVID-19.

The temporary 10% COVID-19 retention bonus introduced on April 10<sup>th</sup> will expire effective July 16, 2020. The bonus will be calculated at 10% based on the hours worked during the set time frame and employee's rate of pay and appear on your August 7<sup>th</sup> paycheque.

This bonus will be paid out to any hourly employee who:

- Is an hourly front-line employee at a site
- Is a current employee as of July 16, 2020
- Began work with HHF any time prior to June 18, 2020
- If contracted, has fulfilled the total duration of their contract (e.g. employees who had a contract end date of June 18 and were recalled back to their previous position)
- Had declared HHF as their primary work site
  - o Recalled employees will not be eligible

Our 2020 Operational Budget has been negatively impacted by COVID-19, and we continue to lose rental revenues and face increasing expenses. When the temporary shift premium was introduced in mid-April, the extent of COVID-19's impact on our operations, workforce, and budget were unknown. Our most recent financial forecasts strongly indicate the need to reduce as many expenses as possible to ensure we can continue providing quality care for our residents with our existing workforce intact. The decision to end the term of the shift premium at this time has not been taken lightly, but as a not-for-profit affordable housing organization, our priority is balancing quality of service with sustainability.

### **UPDATED** What safety measures has Heartland Housing Foundation put into place to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

HHF has implemented the following Engineering, Administrative and PPE controls to prevent the spread of, or exposure to, COVID-19 at your site.

#### Current Engineering Controls:

- Restricted entry to facilities
- Self-isolation protocols in place for residents and staff
- Increased cleaning and 2 step sanitizing of all high touch areas a minimum of 3 times per day
- Implemented social distancing between residents during mealtimes and for recreation activities
- Eliminated third-party recreation events and reduced attendee for in-house recreation activities
- Increased frequency of resident walker cleaning and sanitizing
- Ceased self-serve or buffet meal service
- Removed all shared games, puzzles and equipment from normal use

#### Administrative Controls:

- Health screening measures put into place for staff to ensure they are reporting to work when they are not ill or exposed to COVID-19.
- Resident screening measures put into place prior to entry into facilities and are immediate quarantine protocols in place for residents if they are feeling ill.
- In-lodge visitors are restricted to 2 Designated Support Persons per resident. These individuals undergo the health assessment screening prior to entry and must wear a mask.
- Staff advised to monitor residents and report any signs of changes to the resident's health immediately to their Supervisor or Manager.
- Controls put into place for staff working at multiple sites per day.
- Ongoing re-enforcement and prompting of proper hand hygiene to staff and residents verbally and in postings.
- All non-essential meetings have been cancelled or changed to conference calls when social distancing cannot be achieved.

#### PPE Controls:

- Effective July 24, 2020 we will be implementing **continuous masking in all resident areas** for all employees regardless if physical distancing can be maintained.
- A resident area is defined as any area in which a resident would have direct access to.
- The following would be excluded from continuous masking, however, a mask must be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained: private offices, kitchen, maintenance and mechanical rooms.
- **Eye protection will be required for entry** (including traying) into an isolated resident's unit if physical distancing can be maintained.



- Eye protection must be used in conjunction with masking and can be used to enter multiple resident units, as long as the eye protection is not soiled.
- Should entry into an isolated resident's unit be required when there is potential exposure to any blood or bodily fluids, **employees must don full PPE** including masks, eye protection, gown, and gloves. For example, if employees are responding to a pendant call of an isolated resident, full PPE is required.
- Residents who are showing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated and tested for COVID-19. Based on the test results and in consultation with Public Health PPE protocols may be changed.
- PPE is defined as the last line of defense to ensure the safety of our workers. PPE is different for each position, however the use of masks while within 2 metres/6 feet has now been added to each Job Hazard Assessment (JHA). This includes all areas of work as well as within close contact of any other person which might include but not limited to co-workers, residents, or visitors.

HHF is also developing business continuity plans to ensure that operations will not be affected should a lodge be declared in 'outbreak'.

### My site has been deemed to be in a COVID-19 outbreak, am I safe?

HHF has implemented safety measures that protect our employees from the risks of COVID-19 while performing their work. The risk of contracting COVID-19 has not changed as long as employees are following the above-mentioned safety protocols, using PPE properly and frequent hand washing.

### **UPDATED** I work in a position that requires me to be within 2 metres/6 feet of my colleagues and residents despite social distancing best practices. Do I need to wear PPE?

Yes, you would be required to wear PPE specific to your role and the tasks you will be performing.

- Effective July 24, 2020, we will be implementing **continuous masking in all resident areas** for all employees regardless if physical distancing can be maintained.
- A resident area is defined as any area in which a resident would have direct access to.
- The following would be excluded from continuous masking, however, a mask must be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained, private offices, kitchen, maintenance and mechanical rooms.
- **Eye protection will be required for entry** (including trayng) into an isolated resident's unit, if physical distancing can be maintained.
- Eye protection must be used in conjunction with masking and can be used to enter multiple resident units, as long as the eye protection is not soiled.
- Should entry into an isolated resident's unit be required in which there is potential exposure to any blood or bodily fluids, **employees must don full PPE** including masks, eye protection, gown, and gloves. For example, if employees are responding to a pendant call of an isolated resident, full PPE is required.
- Residents who are showing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated and tested for COVID-19. Based on the test results and in consultation with Public Health PPE protocols may be changed.

PPE is defined as the last line of defense to ensure workers' safety as it is the least effective type of control after engineering or administrative controls. Proper PPE required for the job(s) workers are performing is defined in their JHA and has been reviewed during the time of COVID-19 protocol to ensure adequate controls are in place to control risk.

Sometimes wearing PPE creates greater risks to individuals who improperly store, use, and dispose of them. For example, if you wore gloves for every task you performed without changing them it can actually increase the likelihood of virus transmission by giving the virus another surface to survive on. Similar to mask usage. People who continuously adjust and readjust a mask throughout the day with dirty hands is simply transferring any contaminates from their hands or on the surface of the mask directly onto their face.

The best protection for our staff is:

- Wash your hands using an alcohol-based rub or soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact\* with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched
- DO NOT work when sick.
- Stay home and self-isolate for at least 10 days or until your symptoms resolve, whichever is greater
- Limit your public interactions and create social distance of 2 meters among others, including when working
- Wear PPE that is appropriate for the task you are performing and ensure you are following proper hygiene and use protocols

It is important to remember to try to keep 2 metres/6 feet of space between you and others.

**UPDATED** I have seen people wearing surgical masks in the public, should I be wearing one while working?

- Effective July 24, 2020, we will be implementing **continuous masking in all resident areas** for all employees regardless if physical distancing can be maintained.
- A resident area is defined as any area in which a resident would have direct access to.
- The following would be excluded from continuous masking, however, a mask must be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained, private offices, kitchen, maintenance and mechanical rooms.
- **Eye protection will be required for entry** (including tray) into an isolated resident's unit, if physical distancing can be maintained.
- Eye protection must be used in conjunction with masking and can be used to enter multiple resident units, as long as the eye protection is not soiled.
- Should entry into an isolated resident's unit be required in which there is potential exposure to any blood or bodily fluids, **employees must don full PPE** including masks, eye protection, gown, and gloves. For example, if employees are responding to a pendant call of an isolated resident, full PPE is required.
- Residents who are showing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated and tested for COVID-19. Based on the test results and in consultation with Public Health PPE protocols may be changed.

Heartland Housing Foundation wants to protect our staff and residents to the best of our ability. Some best practices to follow in the prevention of spread is to:

- Stay home when you are sick
- Practice physical distancing:
  - o Stay 2 metres away from others including staff, residents and visitors
  - o Stand side by side and avoid face to face interaction
  - o Use email, skype, phone and text to communicate with others when possible
  - o Order supplies online for delivery when you can
  - o Avoid gathering in public places
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or cough and sneeze into your elbow
- Wash or sanitize your hands before touching your face

**UPDATED** How come only certain staff are required to wear a mask?

- Effective July 24, 2020, we will be implementing **continuous masking in all resident areas** for all employees regardless if physical distancing can be maintained.
- A resident area is defined as any area in which a resident would have direct access to.
- The following would be excluded from continuous masking, however, a mask must be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained, private offices, kitchen, maintenance and mechanical rooms.

- **Eye protection will be required for entry** (including traying) into an isolated resident's unit if physical distancing can be maintained.
- Eye protection must be used in conjunction with masking and can be used to enter multiple resident units, as long as the eye protection is not soiled.
- Should entry into an isolated resident's unit be required in which there is potential exposure to any blood or bodily fluids, **employees must don full PPE** including masks, eye protection, gown, and gloves. For example, if employees are responding to a pendant call of an isolated resident, full PPE is required.
- Residents who are showing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated and tested for COVID-19. Based on the test results and in consultation with Public Health PPE protocols may be changed.

### What can I do protect my skin from PPE use?

While disposable gloves are a vital resource in in our communities, constant wear can cause allergic reactions and skin irritation. The good news is that these reactions can be prevented, it's just a case of knowing how to do so.

- Keep your hands moisturized, especially in dry weather like winter. Avoid using oil-based hand creams when using your gloves.
- Always perform proper hand hygiene before and after using gloves.
- Use warm water to wash your hands instead of really hot water and make sure your hands are completely dry afterwards.
- If you struggle with extremely dry hands, take care of them frequently, and seek medical advice for medicated creams if necessary or to address underlying issues that may be causing dryness.
- HYDRATION is key. If you cannot drink water frequently during your shift, be sure to drink lots before/ after your shift and during your break.

### Skin protection:

- Complete daily moisturizing of dry skin using a cream-based moisturizer
- Keep moisturizer 'handy' for when you need it
- Ensure hands and face are dry and creams are absorbed prior to donning gloves and/or masks

### Do I need to wear PPE that is irritating my skin?

- If you can maintain physical distancing (6 feet/2 meters) and you are not in contact with ill people, you should not require a mask; and
- If you will not be touching dirty surfaces, do not touch your face after touching a dirty surface, you are exercising proper hand hygiene between tasks and you do not have any open sores on your hands, gloves may not be required.

### Proper use of PPE:

- Use PPE only when it is required in accordance with your job-specific task hazard controls (see your Job Hazard Assessment in the site Handi-Guide)
- Apply barrier cream or cotton liner underneath gloves when required
- While wearing masks, do not apply pressure, this can cause skin irritation
- Remove masks when not required for the task or at least every 4 hours
- Discard used masks
- If additional PPE is required, let your Supervisor know

### I am worried I may bring the virus home to my family. How can I ensure that I do not bring it home?

- It is critical that employees follow proper protocol to helping prevent the spread by:

- Practicing physical distancing
- Practicing good hygiene: washing hands often for at least 20 seconds, cover coughs and sneeze and avoiding touching face
- Self- monitoring for symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat
- By protecting yourself and using your PPE (gloves) properly while at work, you are also protecting your family members and loved ones.
- If uniforms or clothing are soiled, staff are advised to change out of them before leaving their place of work. If you change at work, transport the clothes you have changed out of into either a disposable plastic bag or a washable cloth bag that can be laundered at the same time as the clothes.
- Launder uniforms in hot water wash cycle followed by a cycle in the dryer
- Clean personal accessories (i.e. nametags) upon removing it using disinfectant wipes
- Wash hand and face with soap and water upon returning home. Fully showering/bathing is preferred by some and may be reasonable although there is no evidence that it is required.
- Employees who are healthy and not experiencing symptoms can still share spaces with their family including bedrooms and bathrooms.
  - If you do become symptomatic, self-isolation is required
- A good practice to remember at home is to regularly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily or when visibly soiled such as:
  - Tabletops
  - Light switches
  - Door knobs
  - Sink taps
  - Toilet handles
  - Kitchen counter tops

## What happens during a COVID-19 outbreak?

COVID-19 outbreak protocols are very similar to the influenza protocols that most employees have been trained on. HHF is confident in the measures that we have put into place for the safety of our residents and employees. We are in compliance with all the Health Order guidelines and in some situations have gone above the requirements.

An outbreak is deemed when 1 or more residents and/or staff tests positive for COVID-19. HHF will work with Public Health, Alberta Health Services, Communicable Disease Control and Occupational Health and Safety to ensure that we are doing all the correct things and to help control the spread as promptly as possible. Working with these groups helps us find the 'ground zero' of the situation, helps with contact tracing, testing for the appropriate people, and validates that our staff are kept safe.

Other measures might be taken as an immediate response such as closing the dining room, increase in cleaning, cancelling all recreation activities.

## There are so many changes happening in such a short time, why?

Guidelines and direction from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer have been occurring quite regularly in which we are required to implement and follow. We are in contact with other service providers, public officials and members of AHS daily trying to plan for the next wave of changes in hopes we have had a well-thought-out process prior to enforceable changes.

## How do I stay up to date with things happening in Heartland Housing Foundation?

Heartland Housing is working diligently to ensure all staff, residents, families and vendors are kept informed on the changes that are occurring on a frequent basis. We are working hard to ensure that all messages are communicated timely to the appropriate people. We are using the following methods of communication:

- Employees
  - o Face-to-face with managers
  - o Bulletin boards in staff rooms
  - o Communication book
  - o Emails
  - o Heartland's website
  - o If critical and emergent information needs to be passed along, Dayforce messages may be used
- Residents
  - o Face-to-face from staff
  - o Meal announcements
  - o Newsletters
  - o Postings throughout the lodge
  - o Heartland's website
  - o Social media
- Families
  - o Letters
  - o Emails
  - o Phone calls (if critical)
  - o Heartland's website
  - o Social media

## Resources

For the most up-to-date and accurate information about COVID-19, visit these resources:

Government of Alberta: <https://www.alberta.ca/COVID19>

Alberta Health Services: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

Alberta Health Services (for Healthcare Staff):

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16947.aspx>

Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>